

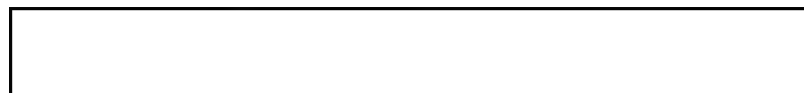
Top Secret



DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

Intelligence Memorandum

The Mercenary Mutiny and the Tshombé Plot



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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
25 July 1967

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Mercenary Mutiny and the Tshombé Plot

Summary

The mutiny in the eastern Congo is subsiding, and in its wake there is a growing suspicion in some quarters--backed by some fairly good evidence--that it was part of a larger plot aimed at restoring former premier Moise Tshombé to power. That Tshombé had been almost constantly engaged in some form of "plotting" since he left the Congo is almost certain. He may even have been in touch over the past few months with the mercenaries who staged the mutiny, since he was probably planning to use them in his comeback attempt. That the mutiny, however, was part of a Tshombist "master plan" is much less certain. The available evidence suggests that even if there was a plot, the mercenary action was essentially spontaneous, stimulated by Tshombé's kidnaping on 30 June as well as by parochial mercenary grievances.

Note: This memorandum was produced solely by CIA. It was prepared by the Office of Current Intelligence and coordinated with the Office of National Estimates and with the Clandestine Services.

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d. More significant

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[redacted] are two aspects of the situation itself which throw doubt on the theory that the mutiny was designed to be part of a Tshombé take-over. In the first place, it seems unlikely that a plot would be put into action right after its leader had been taken out of circulation. Second, any plot of this type must aim at seizing Katanga or Kinshasa (or both) to have any hope of success. For this, additional troops would be necessary. Although the story of a mercenary camp in Angola is one of the most durable features of the Tshombist-plot literature, there is no good evidence that such a camp exists. Without a camp in Angola--or a fleet of mercenary-laden planes in Rhodesia, or some outside force of this type--a mutiny in the northeastern Congo would have little chance of success. The plotters outside the Congo

have given many indications that they are aware of this, and it seems unlikely that they would start action without being sure that more forces were available.

One Possible Scenario

3. As is usually the case in the murky world of Congolese intrigue, there is no completely satisfactory answer to all these questions. A good case can be made, however, for a scenario in which the mercenaries acted after warning their outside contacts but without the approval of the latter. On this theory, the mercenaries, unpaid for months and knowing that Mobutu was planning to disband them, reacted in a typically aggressive and unforesighted fashion when the news of Tshombé's kidnaping was added to their other grievances: they moved into the nearest towns (Kisangani, Bukavu, and perhaps Kindu), shot up a few Congolese soldiers, scared off the rest, behaved in courtly fashion toward local Europeans, and then tried to decide what to do next.

5. If this reading of the evidence is accurate, it appears that while Tshombé awaited his fate at the hands of the Algerian courts, Tshombé's assets for any comeback attempt were being expended in a piecemeal and uncoordinated way which gave Mobutu an opportunity to neutralize the plot as well as the chief plotter. Thus, if Mobutu's outside opponents are still interested in moving against him in the wake of the kidnaping and the mutiny, they will have to do so with drastically shrunken resources.

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Talking Paper for "The Mercenary Mutiny and the Tshombé Plot"

1. There has been wide speculation in the press and a spate of diverse intelligence reports alleging that the mercenary mutiny in the Congo was part of a Tshombist plot to stage a coup against the Mobutu government. This memo is an effort to examine the facts as well as the allegations and to draw up a scorecard of the evidence supporting the plot theory and the data denying such a plot.

2. We believe that a Tshombé plot--or indeed perhaps several Tshombé plots--did exist. That the mutiny, however, was part of a Tshombist "master plan" is much less certain. In any event, the available evidence suggests that the mercenary part of any such plot went off prematurely, stimulated by Tshombé's kidnaping on 30 June as well as by parochial mercenary grievances.